

## Please pray for the Canonization of:



**Henriette Delille** is the first United States native-born African American whose cause for canonization has been officially opened by the Catholic Church. A free woman of color in New Orleans, she wanted to be religious but legal and social restraints twenty years before the abolition of slavery and the Civil War prevented local communities from accepting negroes. She, along with two friends, founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1942. Henriette was chosen the leader. They trusted in God and they grew and grew, until today many hundreds of young women have consecrated themselves to God's service as Sisters of the Holy Family. For 168 years, the Sisters of the Holy Family, in the spirit of their foundresses and early predecessors, have continued to serve the youth, the elderly, and the needy members of society. The Sisters have not only served the New Orleans community, but also many people throughout cities in Louisiana; Texas, California, in Washington, D.C., Oklahoma, Alabama, Florida, Belize, and Panama Central America; and Benin City, Nigeria, Africa.

<http://www.sistersoftheholymfamily.com/CanonizationProcess.html>

**Augustus Tolton** was born on April 1, 1854, from Ralls County, Missouri. He escaped slavery when his mother took her children and walked to freedom by crossing the Mississippi River, eventually reaching Quincy, Illinois. Prior to their escape, the Tolton family was baptized and after getting to Illinois, they became members of the Roman Catholic Church. Augustus wanted to become a priest but the American Catholic Church did not allow Black men to be admitted to studies in United States seminaries. His parish priests began to tutor Augustus themselves. Augustus was later admitted to the Propaganda College in Rome to prepare for priesthood. Fr. Augustus Tolton was ordained on April 24, 1886, as the first known and recognized Black priest in the United States of America.

<http://www.toltoncanonization.org/>



**Mother Mary Lange** was born in 1784 in Haiti. Her parents fled Haiti during a revolution and went to Cuba, where Lange received her education. She came to Baltimore in 1813 and settled in Fells Point. Baltimore had a large population of French-speaking Caribbean Catholics. Lange, a well-educated free black woman in a slave-holding state, also had money from her merchant father. She saw a need in educating children of Caribbean immigrants and slaves, a practice which was illegal at that time. Lange, the founder and first superior of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, took the name Mary. The Oblate sisters educated youths and provided homes for orphans. They nursed the sick and dying and sheltered the elderly. Mother Mary Lange's deep faith enabled her to persevere against all odds. Lange was a woman of vision and selfless commitment. She personally took action to meet the social, religious and educational needs of poor women and children. Their ministry is particularly felt in Baltimore at the St. Frances Academy.

<http://www.motherlange.org/> , <http://www.oblatesisters.com/MotherLange.html>

**Pierre Toussaint** was born into slavery on the French colony of Saint Domingue. His master, Jean Berard, encouraged the young Pierre to learn to read and write. In 1787, Berard moved his new wife and several slaves, including Pierre and his younger sister Rosalie, to New York City. Pierre was established a good reputation among New York's elite as a hairdresser. At the age of forty-one, Pierre was a free man and later married. He and his wife continued charitable work Pierre had begun informally, helping Haitian refugees find jobs and caring for orphans. Next, the couple opened a school to teach black children a trade. When the plague struck New York, Pierre personally cared for the victims. When Pierre's sister, Rosalie, died leaving an orphaned young daughter, Euphemia, Pierre and Juliette welcomed her into their home. In 1968, the long process to canonize Pierre Toussaint as a saint in the Roman Catholic Church began.

<https://obmny.org/pierre-toussaint-cause-guild>





Julia Greeley was born a slave in Hannibal, Missouri sometime between 1833 and 1848, where she endured some horrific treatment – once, as a slave master beat Greeley’s mother, the whip caught Julia’s right eye and destroyed it. Work with the family of William Gilpin, Colorado’s first territorial governor, brought her to Denver in about 1878. After leaving the Gilpins’ service, Greeley found odd jobs around the city. At Sacred Heart Parish of Denver, Julia joined the Catholic Church in 1880. She was an enthusiastic parishioner, a daily communicant, and became an active member of the Secular Franciscan Order starting in 1901. The Jesuit priests at her parish recognized her as the most fervent promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Despite her own poverty, Greeley spent much of her time collecting food, clothing and other goods for the poor. She would often do her work at night, so as to avoid embarrassing the people she was assisting. Though she was earning only \$10 to \$12 a month cleaning and cooking, she used much of it to help other people who were poor. Julia Greeley died on June 7, 1918 - the Feast of the Sacred Heart. It is estimated that she was around 80 years old, though because she was born into slavery, her exact age was never known. After her death, her body lay in state in a Catholic parish for five hours, during which a constant stream of people came to pay their last respects to the well-known, well-loved woman. There is only one known photograph of Greeley, holding a child she cared for. The Archdiocese of Denver opened Julia’s cause for canonization in December of 2016, exhumed and moved her remains to the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, where she is the only person buried.

<http://juliagreeley.org/>

Thea Bowman was born in Canton, Mississippi and grew up listening and learning from the wisdom of the “old folks,” the elders of her community. At an early age, Thea was exposed to the richness of her African-American. She was attracted to the Catholic Church by the example of how Catholics seemed to love and care for one another, most especially the poor and needy. She joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration where she would be the only African-American member of her religious community. She was trained to become a teacher. The liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council encouraged Sister Thea to rediscover her African-American religious heritage and spirituality and to enter her beloved Church “fully functioning.” She emphasized that cultural awareness had, as a prerequisite, intentional mutuality. She was eager to learn from other cultures, but also wanted to share the abundance of her African-American culture and spirituality. She was a founding faculty member of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans. In 1984 both her parents died, and she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Sister Thea vowed to “live until I die” and continued her rigorous schedule of speaking engagements, famously addressing the U.S. Bishops at their annual June meeting held in 1989. She urged the bishops to continue to evangelize the African-American community, to promote inclusivity and full participation of African-Americans within Church leadership, and to understand the necessity and value of Catholic schools in the African-American community. And when she was through she invited the bishops to move together, cross arms and sing with her, “We Shall Overcome.” She died peacefully at five o’clock in the morning of March 30, 1990 in the home where she was reared in Canton, MS. Today across the United States there are schools, an education foundation to assist needy students attend Catholic universities, housing units for the poor and elderly, and a health clinic for the marginalized that are named in her honor. Her cause for canonization was opened in 2018 by the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi.

<http://sistertheabowman.com/cause/>

